

SPORTS / A24
Tiger Woods takes Route 66 to win 50th career title

BUSINESS / B1
PSALM rebids Masinloc plant after YNN agreement falls through

NEWS / A2
Retired generals give up, move out of Jusmag houses

ENTERTAINMENT / D1
Pacquiao-Larios fight could push network execs over the edge



Gapan puts heart, sole into Festival of Slippers



By Anselmo Roque
PDI Central Luzon Desk

GAPAN CITY—IF YOU are blessed with 12-foot long feet and can't find slippers big enough for them, drop by this city in Nueva Ecija.

GAPAN A15

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Tuesday, August 8, 2006 ★★ Vol. 21 / No. 241 website: www.inq7.net

Palace backs bid to use vote-counting machines

MALACAÑANG IS SUPPORTING THE MOVE BY President Macapagal-Arroyo's election lawyer to petition the Supreme Court to allow the government to use the automated counting machines bought from the Mega Pacific consortium in the 2007 elections.

Lawyer Romulo Macalintal has said he was filing the petition this week as a taxpayer and not as Ms.

PALACE A2

Mayon's big blast looms

Plans up to move OFWs out by sea

By Christine O. Avendaño and Cynthia D. Balana

THE GOVERNMENT INTENDS to evacuate Filipino workers from Lebanon by sea either through Syria or Cyprus beginning this week, Foreign Undersecretary Esteban Conejos Jr. announced.

Conejos said the decision to take the sea route was firmed up after President Macapagal-Arroyo met with Task Force Lebanon members led by Vice President Noli de Castro yesterday.

"The President wanted to know when (the crisis team) could evacuate using the sea routes and we told her this may happen anytime this week," Conejos told reporters at a Palace briefing.

He said Ms Arroyo wanted a "constant" movement of OFWs out of Lebanon.

De Castro, presidential adviser on overseas Filipino workers, said the President had accepted the offer of Greek shipping tycoon Antonios Antoniou to help

PLANS A6

Malacañang execs snub probe anew

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and TJ Burgonio

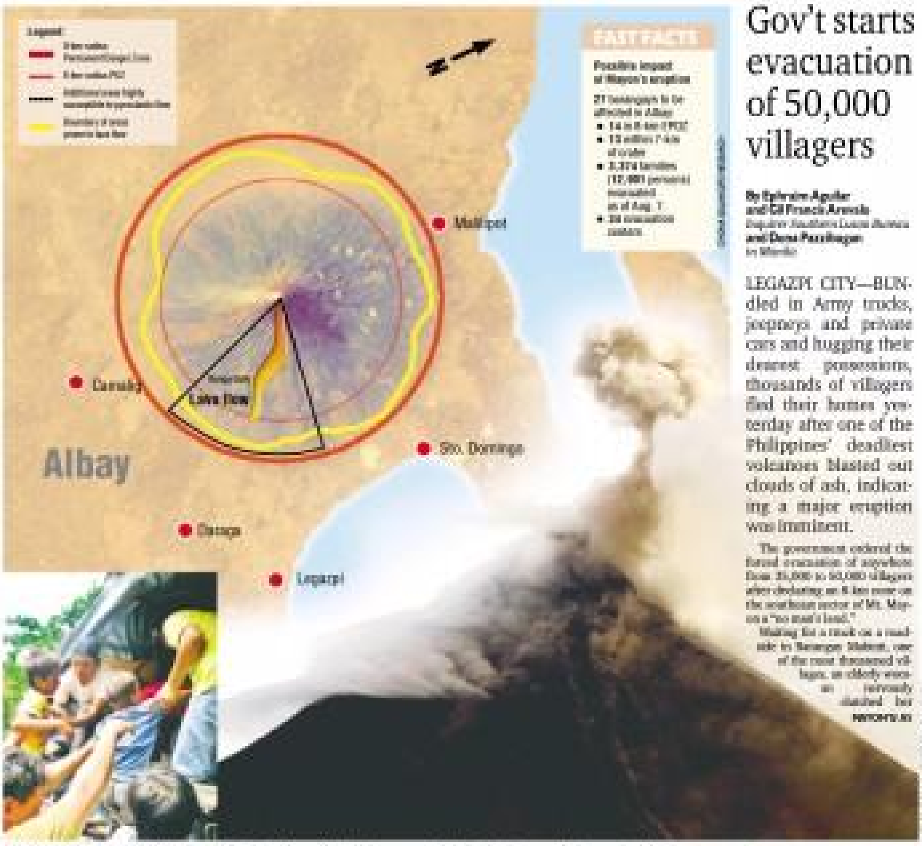
BRING IT ON!

For the third time since the Supreme Court struck down President Macapagal-Arroyo's gag order, Malacañang yesterday snubbed a congressional inquiry and challenged senators to question its boycott before the high tribunal.

None of the seven officials summoned to the Senate committee on labor hearing an alleged malversation of funds amassed from the $25 collected from each departing overseas Filipino worker showed up yesterday despite the threat of being cited in contempt after they boycotted one hearing scheduled on July 31.

"If they think they want to

MALACAÑANG A6



RESIDENTS of Barangay Mabinit in Legazpi City (inset) flee as Mayon Volcano spews ash, indicating that an explosive eruption is imminent.

Gov't starts evacuation of 50,000 villagers

By Ephraim Aguilar and Gil Francis Arevalo
Inquirer Southern Luzon Bureau
and Dona Pazzibugan
in Manila

LEGAZPI CITY—BUNDLED in Army trucks, jeepneys and private cars and hugging their dearest possessions, thousands of villagers fled their homes yesterday after one of the Philippines' deadliest volcanoes blasted out clouds of ash, indicating a major eruption was imminent.

The government ordered the forced evacuation of anywhere from 35,000 to 50,000 villagers after declaring an 8-km zone on the southeast sector of Mt. Mayon a "no man's land."

Waiting for a truck on a roadside in Barangay Mabinit, one of the most threatened villages, an elderly woman nervously clutched her

MAYON A5

No signs of letup in Israel-Hezbollah fighting

BEIRUT, LEBANON—AS INTERNATIONAL efforts to broker a cease-fire faltered, Israel and Hezbollah showed no signs of a letup in nearly four weeks of bitter fighting that has already killed at least 1,100 people, wounded thousands more and drove nearly a million others from their homes.

Israeli warplanes launched a new wave of bombing raids on Lebanon on Monday, killing 14 civilians and turning homes to rubble, after the Jewish state suffered its deadliest day since the conflict began four weeks ago.

At least one Israeli soldier was killed in fierce battles with Hezbollah guerrillas around a border town.

Even as air strikes and ground battles intensified, Israeli officials warned they would continue the offensive to cripple the fundamentalist Shiite Muslim Hezbollah movement regardless of any truce.

At the New York headquarters of the United Nations where the Security Council was expected to adopt a cease-fire resolution by Tuesday, diplomats said they could no longer say when a vote would take place after Lebanon objected to the text.

Arab foreign ministers were scheduled to meet in Beirut on Monday to discuss an alternative seven-point plan proposed by Lebanon's Prime Minister Fuad Siniora to bring a halt to 27 days of warfare.

As day broke over Beirut, Israeli fighter-bombers pounded Hezbollah's stronghold in the southern suburbs with bombs and air-to-ground missiles, sending huge clouds of black smoke into the air over districts that had already been largely reduced to rubble.

Israeli warplanes also struck houses in villages around the port of Sidon, the main city in the south and carried out a dozen raids on roads linking the region with Syria, including the highway leading to the main border crossing.

At least 14 civilians were killed in the air strikes. In one village, television pictures showed workers hacking with axes through the rubble and twisted metal beams of a house in a bid to find survivors or recover corpses.

The road to Syria, one of the major routes out of Lebanon for people trying to flee the conflict, has been knocked out repeatedly as Israel keeps up its blockade that has left the country almost completely cut off from the outside world.

NO SIGNS A4



BOLANTE'S house in the posh and tightly guarded Ayala Alabang Village in Muntinlupa City.

U.S. ASYLUM REQUEST

Mansion photos to be used vs Bolante

By Philip C. Tubeza

IS THE POSH AYALA ALABANG VILLAGE in Muntinlupa City a "New People's Army-infested area?"

Pictures of the mansion of former Agriculture Undersecretary Jocelyn "Joc-Joc" Bolante in the tightly guarded community of the rich and famous will be submitted to the Chicago immigration court to convince it to dismiss his asylum request in the United States, lawyer Harry Roque said yesterday.

Roque, one of the opposition lawyers who prepared the impeachment complaint against President Macapagal-Arroyo, said pictures of Bolante's home on Mo. Cristina Street would show that his claim that he was in danger of persecution from the NPA was baseless.

Bolante is believed to have engineered the distribution to administration allies of P728 million in fertilizer funds, purportedly to ensure President Macapagal-Arroyo's victory in the 2004 presidential election.

He was arrested at the Los Angeles International Airport on July 7 for supposedly carrying a canceled B1/B2 visa. The reason for the visa cancellation remains a mystery.

Bolante was subsequently detained at the San Pedro Detention Center on Terminal Island, 48 km from Los Angeles.

He is believed to have requested political asylum, supposedly because the NPA, the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines, was targeting him for his involvement in the fund scam that hurt the farmers.

But CPP spokesperson Gregorio Rosal said Bolante's claim of being on the NPA hit list was a ploy to boost his eligibility for asylum.

Roque said he had found at least three case precedents in American jurispru-

MANSION A15

Jusmag generals give up, move out

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

ARMY SOLDIERS WERE READY TO BODILY move out ex-Armed Forces chief of staff Gen. Benjamin Defensor yesterday had he continued to resist eviction from the Joint United States Military Advisory Group (Jusmag) military quarters in Fort Bonifacio.



MEMBERS of the eviction team guard the house of former Armed Forces chief Benjamin Defensor at the Jusmag compound in Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City.

Boncodin back in GMA fold, appointed Petron director

By Christine O. Avendaño

Customs probers clear Tohs of smuggling charges

By Leila B. Salaverria

AFTER A SEVEN-MONTH INVESTIGATION, the Bureau of Customs has cleared ...

Finance dep't files graft charges vs retired BIR official

By Norman Bordadora

THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE'S REVENUE ...

No boxing in schools, says DepEd

By Alcuin Papa

OFWs who fled Lebanon undergo debriefing

Post-traumatic stress

Hezbollah surprises Israel with its training, tactics, arms

No signs of letup in Israel-Hezbollah fighting

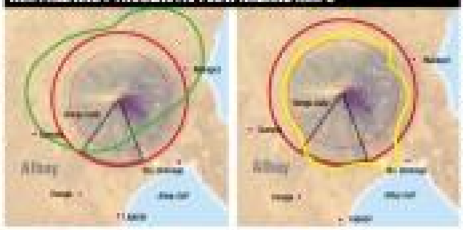
Ceasefire debate

Arab meeting

First step

Mayon's big blast looms

ASH FALL AND PYROCLASTIC FLOW HAZARD MAPS



'Hazardous and explosive'

Airports normal

Some refused to leave

Off-limits to sightseers

Areas in danger

P250 million

Worst-case scenario

Villagers leave with heavy hearts

Malacañang execs snub Senate probe a third time

Info on questions needed

Auditor reveals funds

P530-M disbursement

Palace backs bid to use vote-counting machines

Vulnerable to fraud

3 deficiencies

Recover payments

Plans up to move OFWs out by sea

Coast Guard offer

IOM to continue aid

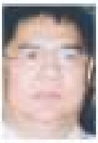
700 in Beirut church

THE DAILY GOSPEL

No case vs 'Erap 4'; 1 charged

Move over 'Garci,' Joc-joc is new 'star' in House impeach case

By Michael Lim Ubac



BOLANTE



GARCILLANO

Erap bring singled out for persecution, say lawyers

By Norman Bordadora

Romulo to visit Burma, mum on Suu Kyi meet

FOREIGN SECRETARY ALBERTO ROMULO yesterday said he is visiting Myanmar (Burma) starting Friday to renew calls from the international community for the military-ruled Southeast Asian nation to enact democratic reforms.

Romulo said he will meet the ruling junta in the "new capital" Naypyidaw, a new-lines site from the former seat of government Rangoon.

He declined to say whether he will meet detained pro-democracy advocate Aung San Suu Kyi, whose freedom has been demanded by the international community.

Romulo expressed optimism on his mission. "There's now light in the sky" over that path, he remarked, noting that the secluded state has recently received UN special envoy Ibrahim Gambari, in a gesture complying with one of the major conditions in the "roadmap" to democracy. *Bell Cordova*

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

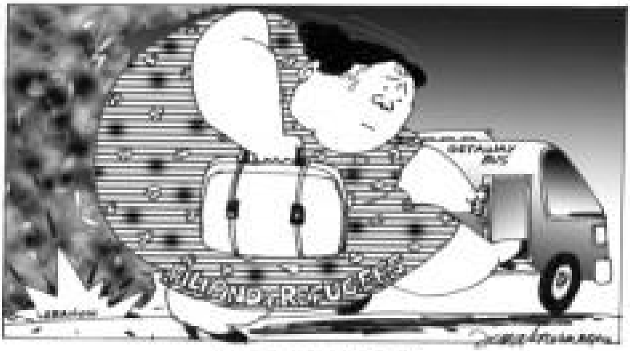
OPINION

In the dark

EDITORIAL

THE ARROYO ADMINISTRATION, SINCE THE "Hello Garci" scandal broke, has kept government officials and ordinary citizens in the dark on controversial cases that are of national concern. [illegible]

[illegible]



Tree on arid soil

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

[illegible]

No. 1 recruiter of the NPA

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

[illegible]

'Ikaw, ano ang OTOP mo?'

POLITICAL TIDBITS



Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

Sensible spending

YOUNG BLOOD

Frances Paola G. Dapiton

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

Celebrating 'Rainbow Families'

AT LARGE



Rina Jimenez-David

Nato to Lebanon—but on one condition

WORLD VIEW



Christoph Bertram

It takes little foresight, however, to predict that more force will not produce more security for Israel

Project Syndicate

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

Criminals in uniform

LETTERS

Baseless opposition to Barbo's appointment

Why are gov't men in order of battle?

'Job orders' working at Owwa

Grandiose infra projects draw funders



INQUIRER TV GUIDE Tuesday, August 8, 2006



TV SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

Across the NATION

9 battalions pursuing 50 Sayyaf men



PATIKUL, SULU—THE MILITARY YESTERDAY said there are more foreign terrorists hiding in the province than previously thought.

Poro Pt. port operations becoming normal

WHAT WENT BEFORE

Kin of OFW who died in Saudi seek help to bring body home



DIGNITY IN WORK

10,000 soldiers sent to battle against Reds



PALPARAN

Digos cops bare plot to kill commentator

₱600M needed to build UP campus inside Clark

SC junks bid for early ruling in Legazpi poll case



Mining firm says it hasn't started digging

Capiz townsfolk defend former agriculture exec

By Felipe V. Celino
PDI Visayas Bureau

Too nice

Concern for the poor

Mansion ...

From page A1

Bodyguards



GIANT SLIPPERS. A woman and her grandson admire pair of giant slippers on display in Gapan, Nueva Ecija, as a highlight of the city's three-week "Tsinelas Festival."

Gapan puts heart, sole into Festival of Slippers

From page A1

Before the war

Thriving industry



NEWS

Police raid fails to nab 'Gringo' in Masbate ranch

By Luige A. del Puerto



HONASAN: "Good" in hiding

[illegible]



Aplus Metro

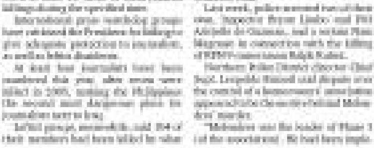
CA stops arrest of LTFRB chief

Motive behind lensman's slay could be financial, say police

Witness points to plumber as gunman



Two suspected abortionists arrested



MetroBriefs

Ambushed in Caloocan

Just helping, says Manny

Escolta as IT center

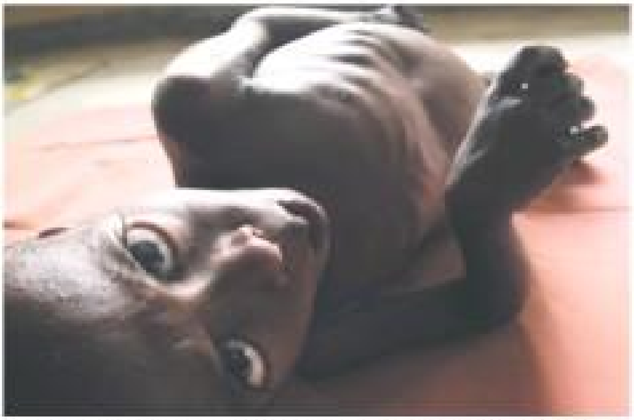
Did you know

Student accuses professor of sexual harassment

'Incomplete' mark

Missed classes

Experts take stock after first quarter-century of war on AIDS



Coping replaces despair in San Francisco

Quotes illustrating the history of AIDS

Early hopes

Ignorance, stigma, poverty

Grass-roots work

Turning point in epidemic

Landmarks in the history of AIDS



Obrador digs in for long fight over vote count

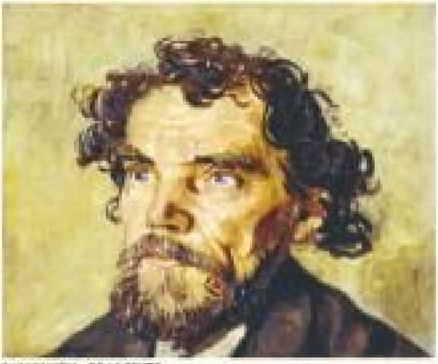


15 aid workers slain in Sri Lanka after fierce battles

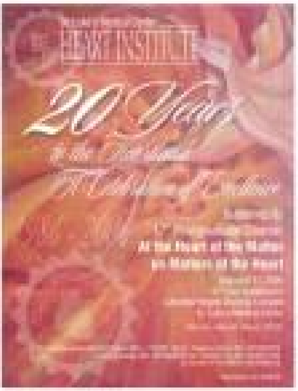
Chad chooses cash, China over Taiwan

The WORLD

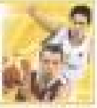
Hong Kong spy law faces stiff opposition



More US states expand citizens' right to shoot in self-defense

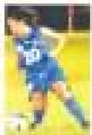


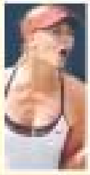
WHAT'S INSIDE
- **SMC-Pilipinas spotters** anew against Qatar /A22



SPORTS

- **Davao FA, NCR** lady booters shut out rivals /A23





- **Sharapova** snaps Clijsters streak to rule WTA tourney /A24

Knights regain top, slip past Altas

Dolphins lean on reserves to best Blazers



HARDLY SHOWING SIGNS OF exhaustion, Boyet Bautista and Aaron Aban again came through for the Letran Knights in a 66-54 victory over the University of Perpetual Help Altas in the NCAA men's basketball tournament yesterday at the Ninoy Aquino Stadium.

No S'ball World Series stint for Bacolod girls

Isip shines in rookie camp

Falcon Bono emerges UAAP stats frontrunner

SMC-Pilipinas sputters anew against Qatar

Winless Filipinos finish dead last



Successive three-pointers

Ramirez's silver best for 8-man judo squad



RAMIREZ

UST, Faith split Adidas Streetball honors



SPORTSWATCH

SBC whips UST for 3rd Paissarelle win

Focus on Process not Results

Showdown slugfest at Robigon

John O, King's Bakeshop come away with victorious debuts

Ochoa, Pesimo top Shell chess

‘Blockbuster’ AF3 races set in Sentul next month



Davao FA, NCR lady booters shut out rivals



Dodgers rip Marlins, up win run to 9

Crack field tees off in Samsung Tour’s Splendido leg today





Unheralded RTU rules rapid chess

Little Debbie faces very tall odds in US Amateurs



Adamson U board wizards show the way

SPORTS

Steinhauer snares 3rd Women's British Open

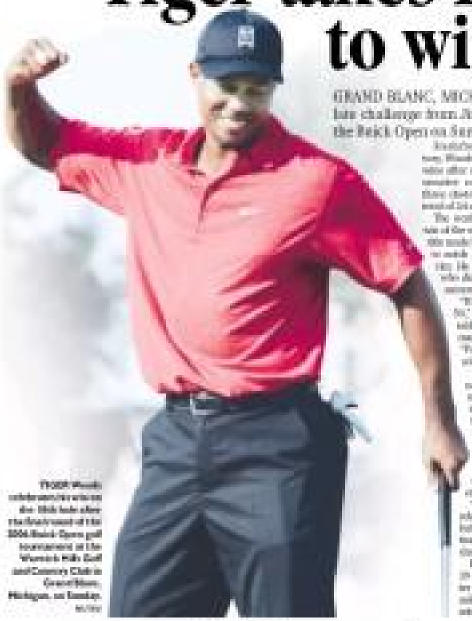


STEINHAUER: Biggest thrill

Landis raps ICU, Wada over release of B sample

Tiger takes Route 66 to win No. 50

GRAND BLANC, MICHIGAN—TIGER WOODS WITHSTOOD A late challenge from Jim Furyk to secure his 50th career title at the Buick Open on Sunday.



Sharapova snaps Clijsters streak



MARIA Sharapova: Breakthrough

Button cops first victory; Schu retires



BUTTON: Amazing

NBA globalization good for basketball—Stern



BUSINESS

Editor Raul O. Marcelo • Assistant Editor Corrie S. Narisma

Peso hits 3-month high of 51.33 to $1



Forex reserves at a record $21.16B in end-July

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PESO YESTERDAY SURGED TO A THREE-month high of 51.33 before closing at 51.43 against the dollar as the American currency faltered ahead of the crucial Federal Reserve meeting on the direction of interest rates.

CURRENCIES



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

STOCK MARKET



Shares up 0.48%

HSBC STUDY

Pinoys retire older, less self-sufficient

By Daxim L. Lucas

IN THIS ISSUE

- Mergers seen to strengthen banking system in RP /B3
- RP seen to push deficit down to P80B in '06/B7

PSALM rebids Masinloc plant



For budding RP traders, a Swiss guide to business

Students of lesser means get sneak peek into dynamic world of business

CORPORATE CITIZEN

Not just for profit

Swiss tradition

Career path

Keeping abreast

Shares up 0.68%

Turf wars

BREAKTIME



Conrado R. Banal III

Pinoys retire older, less self-sufficient

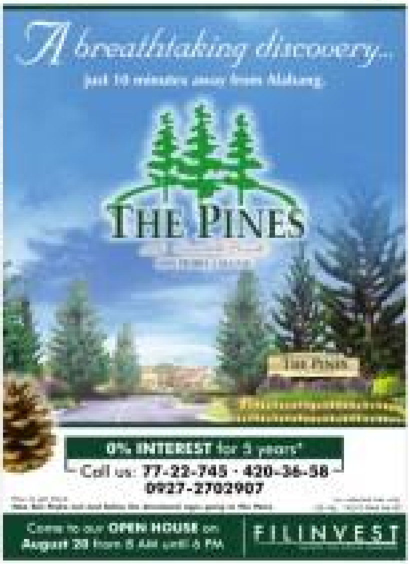
Retirement cues

Attitudes toward retirement

The financial burden

Peso hits 3-month high of 51.33 to $1

Mergers seen to strengthen banking system in RP



PSALM rebids ...













Outlook for the Philippines is improving

Mr. Bearbull



Ayala Corp. posts 97% increase in 1st half net profit to ₱7.3B

Highlands Prime posts 11% income growth in 1st half

Benpres raises ₱17M from sale of Digitel shares

Vietnam overtakes RP in global furniture market

Philippines' market share placed at 0.54% to Vietnam's 0.78%

3 Chinese companies interested in mines



ROLL-ON, ROLL-OFF DEVELOPMENT

Port project to connect Biliran to nautical highway set

Transco posts ₱9B H1 profit

Benguet to claim Cordillera vegetable basket tag



13 mayors work to sustain production of key products

Imported vegetables

Super regions

WTO collapse

Swedish gov't extends grant to improve BIR efficiency

₱100-M assistance part of Sweden's tax program for Southeast Asia

More duties on Japan firm's cargo up

Napocor to lend expertise in power to foreign utilities

ERC approves 2 sales deals

GOINGS-ON

Lecture on IPR violations set

BUSINESS

RP seen to push deficit down to ₱80B in '06

Merrill Lynch says debt paper highly recommended

Fish sector said to post higher yield in 2nd qtr



LIKE THE PROVERBIAL HOTCAKES

Gov't urged to reconsider planned phaseout of gas

DOF seeks to lift VAT exemption of ecozone locators

IN THIS ISSUE
■ A great notion born 25 years ago /C4

LifeStyle

Editor: Cheche Moral-Ferrera

MONDAY ARTS & BOOKS ● TUESDAY FITNESS ● WEDNESDAY 2BU ● THURSDAY FOOD ● FRIDAY FASHION & BEAUTY

When you need more than just a lullaby

Sleep or lack of it can lead to serious injury, even death

Text by Linda B. Bolido
Photos by Roger Carpio



TEMPUR mattresses and pillows are made of originally developed to help astronauts cope with the pressure of overcoming Earth's gravitational pull.

TOSSING AND TURNING in bed may not seem alarming if it only happens occasionally. But if it becomes more the story of your life rather than an occasional inconvenience, then may be it is time to see a sleep expert.

Just don't expect the expert to sing lullabies to put you to sleep. Believe it or not, sleep has become a growing medical specialty, as "sleeping like a log" and "the sleep of the just" are conditions that are increasingly becoming unfamiliar to many people.

Dr. Michael [illegible], head of the Center for Sleep Disorders of The Medical City in Pasig City, says there are about 84 disorders that require expert attention, from the problem of loud snoring, long regarded as no more than an annoyance and/or inconvenience, to now getting serious medical attention.

Sleep means health

The growing concern about sleep disorders stems from the increasing realization that sleep promotes health and well-being. Moreover, sleep or lack of it can lead to injury even death. Insufficient sleep can lead to irritability, lack of concentration and serious accidents that may result in serious injuries, even death.

Some sleep problems can be fatal by themselves. Consider crib deaths in infants and "bangungot."

Though more and more Filipinos are seeking relief for sleep disorders—[illegible] a day usually [illegible]—a lot remains to be done in terms of educating the public not to take sleep problems lightly.

Insomnia or inability to sleep, of course, is a problem that is generally recognized as in need of medical attention. But [illegible] says people should also not be [illegible] if they are aware of making unusual movements and/or sounds during sleep, and feel sleepy during daytime.

Among Filipinos, [illegible] says the most common sleep problems, aside from insomnia, are snoring and apnea (defined in the medical dictionary as "a temporary stopping of breathing, usually caused by an excess accumulation of oxygen or insufficient amount of carbon dioxide in the brain").

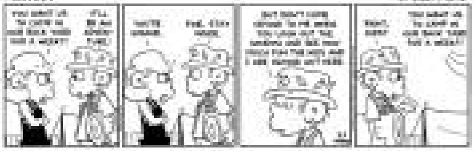
Sleep apnea is more common among children and men while more women suffer from insomnia.

Causes

[illegible] says the problems, particularly among adults, are often caused by lifestyle, genetics, body anatomy and stress. These factors should alert people to the possibility that they can suffer from sleep disorders.

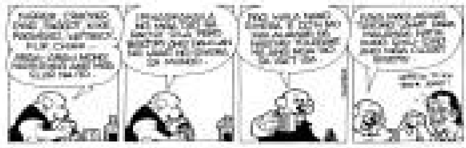
The physician says while some disorders may need no more than counseling, certain problems may require medical intervention, even surgery. He says the first step toward dealing with the problem is awareness. [illegible]

TO BE C3



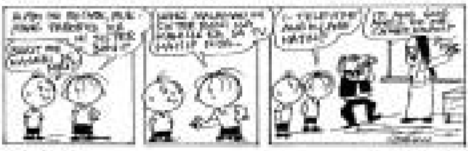


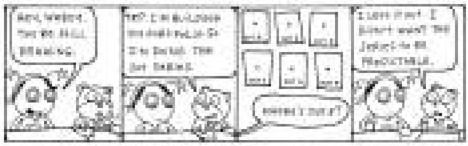


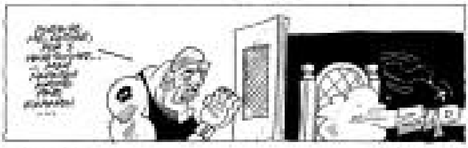


MUTTS

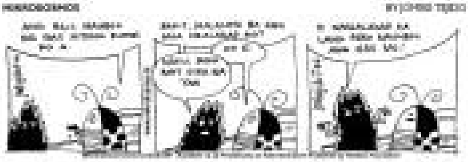


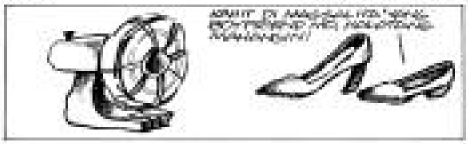






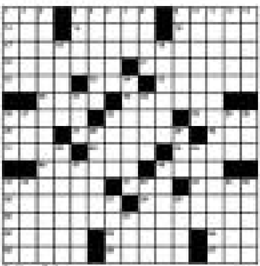


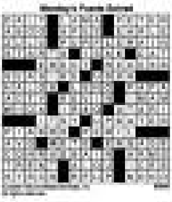






DAILY CROSSWORD





HOROSCOPE

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku — by Dave Green

6		5				9		1
	1	3				5	4	
	4			9			6	
			9		7			
	3	6				2	9	
			2		5			
	5			4			3	
	8	4				6	7	
3		2				8		4

Difficulty Level ★★

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Answer to previous puzzle





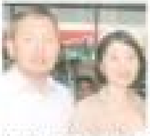




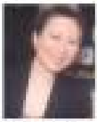


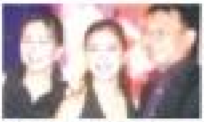


The flavors of Barcelona and a chance to fly to Spain



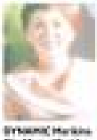








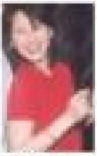












WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH



Maurice Arcache

A great fitness idea

WELL AND GOOD

Tina Juan



Extreme diets

Wisdom over beauty

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

Squat with rotation and side leg lift



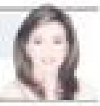


STRENGTHENS TRUNK muscles, shoulders and hips.

Things you can live with or without

INSIDE OUT

Cory Quirino



Live without

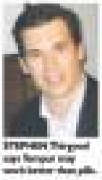
Points to ponder

Live with

Beauty treatment

Affirmation for the day

When you need more than just a lullaby



Natural positions

Why people dream and other questions

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime T. Licauco



ENTERTAINMENT





Mounting a multimillion-dollar sports event

INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

Serious fretting

Revenue streams

Star quality without the star complex

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal



FYI (For Your Indulgence)

Mounting the match required 30 very expensive microphones, 12 cameras, eight round girls, three audio feeds, three generators, three annotators, two OB vans ...

The making of a multimillion-dollar spo

...rts event

...car quality without the ...ar complex

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GALLERIA

1 LADY IN THE WATER - THX
2 MIAMI VICE
3 JUST MY LUCK
4 THE ANT BULLY
5 SUKOB
6 TAMARA
7 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN 2
8 THE BREAK-UP
9 WOLF CREEK
10 SUPERMAN RETURNS

ERMITA

1 SUKOB
2 WOLF CREEK
3 THE ANT BULLY
4 TAMARA
5 MIAMI VICE
6 JUST MY LUCK / THE BREAK-UP
7 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN 2

METRO EAST

1 LADY IN THE WATER
2 SUKOB
3 THE ANT BULLY
4 JUST MY LUCK
5 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN 2
6 THE BREAK-UP
7 MIAMI VICE
8 WOLF CREEK

NOVALICHES

1 MIAMI VICE
2 THE ANT BULLY
3 WOLF CREEK
4 SUKOB

CITISQUARE MALABON

1 THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS 3
2 SUKOB
3 RESERVE
4 RESERVE

PIONEER

1 THE ANT BULLY
2 MIAMI VICE
3 SUKOB
4 WOLF CREEK

"MIAMI VICE" TRIVIA PROMO

NAME:
ADDRESS:
CONTACT NO.:
SIGNATURE:

MIAMI VICE
is NOW SHOWING at Robinsons Movieworld

STA. ROSA

1 LADY IN THE WATER
2 NACHO LIBRE
3 WILD ORCHID 2
4 SUKOB

LIPA

1 LADY IN THE WATER
2 SUKOB
3 NACHO LIBRE
4 THE RUN

DASMARIÑAS

1 LOVEWRECKED
2 TAKE THE LEAD
3 JUST MY LUCK
4 SUKOB

ANGELES

1 THE ANT BULLY
2 NACHO LIBRE
3 LOVEWRECKED
4 SUKOB

IMUS

1 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN 2
2 LOVEWRECKED
3 SUKOB
4 ANT BULLY

STARMILLS

1 THE ANT BULLY
2 SUKOB
3 KISS KISS BANG BANG
4 THE COOLER
5 NACHO LIBRE
6 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN 2

BACOLOD

1 SUKOB
2 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN 2
3 UNITED 93
4 LADY IN THE WATER
5 AN AMERICAN HAUNTING
6 SPL

ILOILO

1 LADY IN THE WATER
2 SUKOB
3 WILD ORCHID 2
4 UNITED 93

SM Cinema movietime SHOWTIME

Your life at a movie

BIG MOVIE

METRO MANILA

IMAX

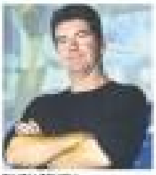
EXCLUSIVE

FRESH NEW MOVIE

SHOWTIME



GORDON RAMSAY



SIMON COWELL

Making Simon Cowell look 'like a choir boy'

LOS ANGELES—SIMON Cowell got you booed, Piers Morgan reduces kids to tears and "Supernanny" Jo Frost marches screaming American children to the "naughty chair."

Long cast as the villains in Hollywood movies, Britons with cut-glass accents and brutal put-downs are enjoying success as the bad boys and girls of US reality TV.

Call it refreshing honesty or simply a British penchant for sarcasm—American audiences [illegible].

"American Idol" judge Cowell—whose insults to wannabe singers range from the curt "Atrocious" to the fanciful "You remind me of a pet poodle"—is seen as crucial to the runaway success of the show over the last four years.

Cowell has been followed by former British tabloid newspaper editor Piers Morgan as a judge for summer ratings hit "America's Got Talent".

Briton Nigel Lythgoe is dishing the dirt as a judge on "So You Think You Can Dance" and Frost, a no-nonsense nanny, is about to start her third US season of the "Supernanny" parenting series.

Chef Gordon Ramsay in "Hell's Kitchen" is making Cowell "look like a choirboy," according to the [illegible] magazine. Ramsay, a short-tempered perfectionist, told one contestant his dish looked like "dehydrated camel's turd."

CHEER FACTOR

"The typical British stereotype is very cultured and polite. Part of the reason being obnoxious works is because it goes against expectations," said Robert Thompson, director of the Center for the Study of Popular Television.

Thompson said the British accent has a distancing effect that gives generally more civil Americans permission to delight in hearing their compatriots get insulted.

"Americans have to be told what to do by other people, but they love to watch other people tell other people what to do," Thompson said. *Jill Serjeant, Reuters*